

5.

A BRIEF
ACCOUNT
OF THE
NEW SECT
OF
Latitudinarians:

Together with some Reflections upon the
NEW PHILOSOPHY.

By S. P. of Cambridge.

In answer to a Letter from his Friend at Oxford

*Quod verum, id antiquissimum.
Fama vix vero favet,
Pejus merenti melior, & pejor bono.*

London, Printed in the Year, 1669.

28
A BRIEF
ACCOUNT
OF THE
NEW SYSTEM
OF

LECTURES

delivered with some reflections upon the

THE PHILOSOPHY

OF

IN ANSWER TO A LETTER FROM HIS FRIEND AT OXFORD

AND

THE

OF

Printed in the Year 1793

3

For my worthy Friend Mr. S. P. at
Cambridge.

Sir,

That aversation which I perceive to be no less in you than in my self, from the impertinent exchange of meer words and complements, would soon put a period to our formerly more frequent intercourse; but that I have a certain itch of curiosity, to know what news there is abroad, which though it may be, is as impertinent, yet it serves to correct the severity of that other humour, which if too much indulged, would make the friendship of those that live at distance too dull and stupid, and no better than what may be between the living and the dead. which consideration advantaged by that natural inclination of mine, as it hath formerly created you some trouble about matters of no great importance, so it is likely to supply me with frequent occasions of the same kind for the future; but at present I shall not need to seek for that which obtrudes it self upon me, whether I will or no. I can come into no company of late, but I find the chief discourse to be about a certain new Sect of men called Latitude-men: but though the name be in every mans mouth, yet the explicit meaning of it, or the heresy which they hold, or the individual persons that are of it, are unknown (for ought I can learn) as the order of the Rosy-crucians. On the one side I hear them represented as a party very dangerous both to the King and Church, as seeking to undermine them both: on the other side I cannot hear what their particular opinions or practices are, that bear any such dangerous aspect; to say the truth, I can meet with nothing distinct concerning them, but that they had their rise at Cambridge, and are followers for the most part, of the new Philosophy, wherewith they have so poisoned that Fountain, that there are like to issue out very unwholsome streams throughout the whole Kingdome. I should be very glad from your own mouth to be resolved of the meaning of this mystical name, and the Sect it denominates, which all of suddain is become so formidable, if we have any Act this year to invite you to Oxford; if not, pray fail not to

(4)
do it in as ample a manner in writing, to which if you will add
your thoughts also concerning the New-Philosophy, you will
not a little gratifie the rest of your old acquaintance here, as
well as

Sir, Yours and

Oxford May

15th. 1662.

G. B.

For Mr. G. B. at Oxford.

Sir,

Yours of the 15th. of May I lately received, wherein
when you desire to see me at Oxford next Act, (if you
have any,) it is, I suppose, rather of course than out of any
such expectation, I having been twice already there, and
yet could never be so happy as to get you over to our Com-
mencement. Truly it is as far from Cambridge to Oxford, as
it is from Oxford to Cambridge, and therefore you must hold
me excused if you see me no more there till you have re-
paid me with a visit here: but to say the truth I must pre-
sently after the Commencement prepare for my journey into
the North, where my friends are ready to fall out with me
for neglecting them so long.

2. As for the question you desire to be resolved in, it is
more than I dare undertake to do; for though this name of
Latitude-men be daily exagitated amongst us both in Ta-
verns and Pulpits, and very tragical representations made
of them, yet we know as little what it means, as you at Ox-
ford do; and I verily believe the men of that Sect are as lit-
tle able to give in a list of their fraternity, and are as free
from any plot against King or Church, as King Arthur's
Knights, or the *Rosy-Brotherhood*, which you have very hap-
pily compared them with: and truly it is to be suspected
they fly in the air too when they meet in their invisible con-
venticles to promote their unheard of machinations. A *Lat-
itude-man* therefore (according to the best definition that I
can collect) is an image of clouts that men set up to encoun-
ter with for want of a real enemy; it is a convenient name
to reproach a man that you owe a spight to, ('tis what you
will

will, and you affix it upon whom you will) 'tis some thing
will serve to talk of when all other discourse fails.

3. But you would think I had a mind to shuffle with you, if I should give you only this general account; for you will not imagine I can be so short-sighted, but that I may be able to see farther into the matter than so; that I may not therefore frustrate your expectation, I will tell you all that I am able to understand or conjecture concerning it; the greatest part of the men that seem to be pointed at under that name, are such, whose fortune it was to be born so late, as to have their education in the University, since the beginning of the unhappy troubles of this Kingdome, where they ascended to their preferments by the regular steps of election, not much troubling themselves to enquire into the Titles of some of their Electours; they are such as are behind none of their neighbours either in Learning or good manners, and were so far from being sowed with the Leaven of the times they lived in, that they were always looked upon with an evil eye by the successive usurping powers, and the general out-cry was, that the whole University was over-run with *Arminianisme*, and was full of men of a Prelatical Spirit, that had apostatized to the Onions and Garlick of *Egypt*, because they were generally ordained by Bishops; and in opposition to that hide-bound, strait-lac'd spirit that did then prevail, they were called *Latitude-men*; for that was the first original of the name, what ever sense hath since been put upon it: this was a certain barr to their preferment, as they were sure to find, if any of them came before the Committee of Tryers, who (as it was reported) had gotten a List of all those that were Ordained by the Bishop of *Normich*; and truly if they that were turned out of their preferment, were esteemed Martyrs, I know not why these that were debarred thereof upon the same grounds, may not be called Confessors.

4. And now this being the state of the University, can it be wonderful, if upon the happy restitution of the Church, there were a general readiness in most men to conform to the commands and injunctions thereof? and yet I am sorry to

hear some men, even in those discourses when they should be careful to deliver nothing but the sacred oracles of God, talk at such a rate as if they were offended to see so general a conformity. It seems very strange that any son of the Church should be displeased to see the number of her children to encrease beyond expectation. I hope it is not because there will be the more likely to lay a claim to a share in the patrimony; nay I am well assured it is far from any of her genuine offspring, that are faithful to her interest, to be so affected; or if at any time some less becoming expression should drop from them, it hath only proceeded from misinformation and want of a right understanding of things, which upon better thoughts it is likely they could wish unsaid. But it cannot be expected but the prosperity of the Church, will occasion the flocking in of many less worthy persons, who will be very ambitious to be accompted in the number of her children, who for want of something else to render them more considerable than their Neighbours, must make use of an unmeasurable ostentation of their Zeal and forwardness, which they think is best expressed by slander and reproaching those whom they have out-stripped, not in sincerity, but in shew and appearance; and it may be some of them may hope to expiate their former disaffections by their present overdoing, and think to recommend themselves by calling others Hypocrites: It were I say a thing to be wondered at, if there should not some such men as these creep into the Church, since it is become a profitable way, who by such unworthy acts will endeavour to compass their designs, and by breeding and fomenting publike differences, will hope to serve their private turns; but I am confident their number is very small, and that the most part are men of more noble and generous spirits, that hate such unworthiness, however their names may sometimes be abused by some few unquiet spirits that make all this noise and stirr. For I must tell you, I do not find that the grave heads, or other prudent persons of the University give any countenance to this peevish talk of some few, who for distinction sake, (if *Latitude* be a name of reproach) will not I hope

hope be offended to be called *Narrow-men*, notwithstanding. But that there may remain no suspicion of their disaffection to the Church in any respect, I will give you a brief account of what I conceive to be their sentiments in each point relating thereunto, which are the Liturgy, the Ceremonies, the Government, and the Doctrine of the Church. As for the first, they conceive there ought by all means to be a settled Liturgy, it having alwayes been the practice both of the Jewish and Christian, and more or less retained by all reformed Churches, that there can be no Solemnity of publick worship without it, that it is the greatest check to devotion that can be, to hear men mix their private Opinions with their publick Prayers, which are for the most part false, and have an evil influence on the lives of men: yet this hath been almost the Universal practice for these twenty years; The like may be said of those absurd, ridiculous, blasphemous expressions that do so frequently occur in extempore prayers, under the pretence of being familiar with God Almighty; to say nothing of those seditious and traitorous principles, craftily thereby insinuated into the minds of people, with greater authority than in their Sermons could be done; for as much as there is a greater awe and solemnity in the one above the other; which also shews how uncomely a thing it is for men to ostentate their parts and abilities therein, as they were wont to do by their empty Rhetorick and tedious prolixity. Our Latitudinarians therefore are by all means for a Liturgy, and do preferre that of our own Church before all others, admiring the Solemnity, gravity, and primitive simplicity of it, its freedome from affected phrases, or mixture of vain and doubtfull opinions; in a word they esteem it to be so good, that they would be loth to adventure the mending of it, for fear of marring it.

As for the Rites and Ceremonies of Divine worship they do highly approve that vertuous mediocrity which our Church observes between the meretricious gaudiness of the Church of *Rome*, and the squalid sluttishness of Fanatick conventicles. Devotion is so overlaid by the Papists, that she is oppressed and stifled with the multitude of her own garments: *Pars minima*

est ipsa puella sui: some of our modern reformers to make amends, have stripped her stark naked, till she is become in a manner cold and dead; The Church of *England* only hath dressed her as befits an honourable and vertuous Matron. There are few men so abstractedly intellectual, but that their devotion had need to be advanced with something that may strike upon their outward senses, and engage their affections; and therefore while we live in this Region of mortality we must make use of such external helps, & recommend Religion to the people by those ornaments which the Church hath according to her prudence thought fittest for those ends. The Church of *Rome* is a luxuriant vine, full of superfluous branches, and over-run with wild grapes, from whence many a poysonous and intoxicating potion is pressed forth; But the greatest part of Reformers have done like the rude *Thracian* in the Apologue, who instead of moderate pruning and dressing his vines, as his more Skilful *Athenian* Neighbours did, cut them up by the Roots; but the Church of *England* is the only well ordered Vine-yard.

In like manner they have a deep veneration of her Government, which they stedfastly believe to be in it self the best, and the same that was practised in the times of the Apostles. They did alwayes abhor both the Usurpation of Scottish Presbytery, and the confusion of Independent Anarchy; and do esteem it one of the methods which the Prince of darkness useth, to overthrow the Church and Religion, by bringing the Clergy into contempt, which experience tells us will necessarily follow upon the removing the several Dignities and preeminence among them; for when the Bishops are once levelled with ordinary Presbyters, the Presbyters will soon be trampled on by the meanest of the Laity: and when every Preacher would needs be a Bishop, every Rustick and Mechanick took upon him to be a Preacher.

Lastly for the Doctrine of the Church, they do cordially adhere to it, as doth sufficiently appear by their willingness to subscribe to the thirty nine Articles, and all other prints of Doctrine contained either in the Liturgy or book of Homilies.

and particularly (whatsoever may be privately whispered to the contrary) they do both devoutly adore the blessed Trinity in the Letany, and make solemn profession of their Orthodox faith, both concerning it and other points, in the three Creeds, not excepting that which is commonly ascribed to *Athanasius*, nor is there any Article of Doctrine held forth by the Church, which they can justly be accused to depart from, unless absolute reprobation be one, which they do not think themselves bound to believe.

5. Nor is it credible they should hold any other Doctrine than the Church, since they derive it from the same fountains, not from the *Spinose school-men*, or *Dutch systematicks*, neither from *Rome* nor *Geneva*, the Council of *Trent*, nor Synod of *Dort*, but from the Sacred writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, in interpreting whereof, they carefully attend to the sense of the antient Church, by which they conceive the modern ought to be guided: and therefore they are very conversant in all the genuine Monuments of the antient Fathers, those especially of the first and purest ages, not to gather out fine phrases and quaint sentences, but that they may discern between the modern corruptions, and antient simplicity of the Church; to distinguish between the Doctrines received in these latter ages, and those which the primitive Christians received from Christ and his Apostles: for those opinions in Religion, how specious soever, are justly to be suspected, whereof there are no footsteps to be discerned in that golden age of Christianity, that was tryed and purifyed in the fire of persecution: we are not so secure of the succeeding silver age of peace and prosperity, but that there might be some drossy mixture, inferior to the golden, but better than the brazen that trode upon its heels;

Servi r ingenii & ad horrida promptior arma, when the Christians had taken up the swords formerly of their persecutors, and drew them one upon another: but

--de duro est ultima ferro,

Protinus erupit vena peioris in avum

Omne nefas; fugere pudor verumque, fidesque,

*In quorum subiere locum fraude[que] dolique.
Insidiæque, & vis, & amor sceleratus habendi.*

And by this time sure there was need of Reformation, to bring all things to the primitive pattern, to purge out the dross and Tinn, and all baser mettals, which the Church of *England* hath most happily atchieved.

And now let no man accuse them of hearkning too much to their own reason, since their reason steers by so excellent a compass, the antient Fathers and Councils of the Church. For Reason is that faculty whereby a man must judge of every thing, nor can a man believe any thing except he have some reason for it, whether that reason be a deduction from the light of nature, and those principles which are the candle of the Lord, set up in the soul of every man that hath not wilfully extinguished it; or a branch of Divine revelation in the oracles of holy Scripture; or the general interpretation of genuine antiquity, or the proposal of our own Church consensual thereto, or lastly the result of some or all of these: for he that will rightly make use of his Reason, must take all that is reasonable into consideration. And it is admirable to consider how the same conclusions do naturally flow from all these several principles; and what in the faithful use of the faculties that God hath given, men have believed for true, doth excellently agree with that Revelation that God hath exhibited in the Scripture, and the doctrine of the ancient Church with them both. Thus the freedom of our wills, the universal intent of Christ's death, and sufficiency of Gods Grace, the conditions of justification, and many other points of the like nature, which have been almost exploded in these latter degenerate ages of the world, do again begin to obtain, though with different persons upon different accounts; some embrace them for their evidence in Scripture, others for the concurrent testimony of the primitive Church for above four hundred years; others for the reasonableness of the things themselves, and their agreement both with the Divine Attributes & the easy suggestions of their own minds. Nor is there any point in Divinity, where that which is most ancient doth

not prove the most rational, and the most rational the ancientest; for there is an eternal consanguinity between all verity; and nothing is true in Divinity, which is false in Philosophy, or on the contrary; and therefore what God hath joyned together, let no man put asunder.

But these men are generally suspected to be for liberty of Conscience, and that's a principle of dangerous consequence, that will undermine the very foundations of any Church whatsoever; a Church cannot be without Unity and Uniformity; an unlimited discord of opinions and practises will as much obstruct the edification of Gods Temple, as the confusion of Languages did the building of the *Tower of Babel*. Verily this is true; and the most part of them, who while they are under the hatches deny it, do by their practises confirm it, when ever they get power into their hands; but how far the men charged with it are concerned therein, remains to be inquired. Though in the first place I cannot but take notice, that this very objection confutes the vulgar calumny cast upon them, as if they were men of no conscience; for I dare say, by how much the less of conscience any man hath, by so much the less will he care what impositions are laid on it, though for my own part, I shall always think him most consciencious who leads the most unblameable life, though he be not greatly scrupulous about the externals of Religion; and for their lives, I think the *Latitude-men* were never taxed by their greatest enemies. And now let us soberly consider what was before said; they sincerely embrace all the Articles of Doctrine held forth by the Church, they cheerfully use and approve her Liturgy and Ceremonies, they cordially love and obey her government: how then can they pursue any Liberty that can be dangerous to her? for in all other things the Church her self leaves them to their liberty, and who shall blame them for using it? but there are some men it may be, are offended that the Church is so indulgent a Mother that will not unnecessarily impose upon the judgement or practise of her Children; they would have all things bound up, and nothing free; they would fain be adding some ciphers to their signi-

ſcant Articles ſhe now propounds, and inſtead of 39 would make 39000. & tis well if they would content themſelves with ciphers, and not add falſities to make up the tale : they have it may be, an ambition to out-do the Aſſemblies Confeſſion; they would be content that *Aquina's* Summs were put into the Creed, and all the tanglings of the Schools into the Prayers of the Church ; that ſo by their *Longitude*, they might be even with their neighbours of the *Latitude*. Others it may be think we have not ceremonies enough, and if they can find any antiquated Rite in ſome moth-eaten Author, they have an itch preſently of bringing it into the Church, without conſidering whether there be the ſame reaſon or uſe of it now, that may have been in other times and places, and then if their neighbours will not follow their example, but think it enough to do what the Rubrick and Canons require, they ſhall be cryed out on for diſaffected : this is all that liberty of conſcience they can juſtly be accuſed of, unleſs I ſhould add that they are ſo merciful as not to think it fit to knock people on the head becauſe they are not of our Church. The Church of *England* hath never yet embued her hands in blood, and I hope the Zeal of none of her ſons will ever kindle ſuch flames as her ſtep-mother of *Rome* delights to warm her hands at.

And now having taken an impartial view of this ſo much exagitated company of men, we find them ſo far from being any ways dangerous to the Church, or fit to be diſowned by her, that they ſeem to be the very Chariots and Horſemen thereof : for by their ſober and unblameable converſation, they conciliate reſpect and honour to her : by their Learning and Induſtry they defend her : by their moderation they are moſt likely to win upon the minds of diſſenters, who are too many to be contemned : by their accommoda-
 ting themſelves to the people, who (as is too too palpable) are poſſeſſed for the moſt part by the Presbyterians, they may in time bring them over to the Church, and prevent her becoming a ſociety of Shepherds without any Sheep; for really I fear, if the Fathers of the Church were not wiſer than ſome of their angry ſons, who muſt needs be thruſting ſome of their
 younger

younger brethren out of doors, if (I say) all that have been reproached with the name of Latitude, should be disowned by the Church, they that remain would be the least party of men of any one denomination in *England*; and to leave themselves so naked, were to tempt Providence for their preservation, especially considering they stand ready to be assaulted on each hand by two potent Enemies, the Papists and the Presbyterians, both of them numerous, wealthy, subtle, and industrious, who watch all opportunities of subverting the best Church in the world. And therefore certainly this is no time for her to mutilate her self, or to bleed with intestine War; but let her embrace those that are so ready to serve her, with both her Arms, and let all her Children with joint affection and consent oppose the common Enemies.

5. But it will be said, no man is angry that men conform, but that they have no greater zeal for what they conform to; they are as men indifferent, and could be as well content with the contrary. Truly Sir, either I am mistaken in the men, or the charge is very unjust; for I find as many as it hath been my fortune to converse with, that they do very sincerely esteem *Episcopal* government, both as in it self the best, and of Apostolical antiquity; they were always approvers of a Liturgy, & think that of our own Church may easilier be marred than mended; That Religion would lose that due awe & veneration that ought to be preserved in it, if it were not attended with outward Rites and Ceremonies; that private persons are not the judges of that decorum, whereby these things are to be measured, but only the Governours of the Church; and that the Church of *England*, as well in these as all other things is the best constituted Church in the world. But they presume no man would have them to think the whole weight of Religion lies in externals, or that they are of greater account than the eternal and indispensable Laws of good and evil, but that Ecclesiastical laws are as the Jews were wont to say, an Hedge about the Laws of God; these ought stiffly to be observed, and therefore the other not to be neglected; that they

do not consist so indivisibly, but that if it should seem meet to the Fathers of the Church to make any alterations, they were equally bound to submit thereto; this is that Latitude they are so Tragically accused of.

5. But there is another crime which cannot be denied, that they have introduced a new Philosophy; *Aristotle* and the Schoolmen are out of request with them. True indeed it is that *ipse dixit* is an argument much out of fashion; and *fortasse Philosophus non loquitur ex sua sententia, sed ex mente aliorum*, would be accounted as impertinent an answer; it will scarce pass for a Philosophical resolution of any Problem to say, It is the nature of the beast, it is done by virtue of its form or quality; They love to search some more particular cause than the influence of the heavens, nor will they be put off with *complementum Universi*. They embrace a method of Philosophy which they think was as much antienter than *Aristotle*, as you conceive *Oxford* was before *Cambridge*; and was as great a bug-bear to the Presbyterians as a *Crosse* or *Surplisse*, and therefore methinks the Church of *England* should have less reason to be offended with it. For my own part I never had any great skill in it, and am now too old to learn; yet I am far from that humour reprehended by the Poet,

---Turpe putant parere minoribus, & quæ
Imberbes didicere Senes perdenda fateri.

And I suppose it is this freedome and unconcernedness of mine that makes you think my opinion worth knowing in a matter that I am so little conversant in of late years; wherefore I will not undertake to compare the new Philosophy with the old, but instead thereof will tell you a tale.

7. There was a certain Husbandman who occupied a Farm with an antient mansion-house standing in the fields remote from any Town, where there was an old iron Clock in a large wooden frame, which had been a long while out of kelter, and because he was much troubled to know how the time passed, that he might order his business accordingly, he resolved to get this Clock repaired, and while he was considering
where

where to find a man able to do it, it fortun'd that a certain Peripatetick artificer, something above the degree of a Tinker came that way, who undertook to mend it; but after he had bestowed a great deal of work in oyling the wheels, filing teeth, and hanging on more weight, and all to no purpose, at last gave it up for nought, and told him it could not be mended; the farmer partly out of curiosity, and partly in hope to find out the defect, desired this Artificer to show him the nature of Clockwork, and what was requisite to make up a perfect Clock, he though he knew very little what belonged to it, yet being a talkative fellow, and very loth to confess his ignorance in any thing, began a long story, that the nature of Clockwork in general was, *a principle and cause of motion and rest by means of an inward device of its own accord and not by chance*; but this Clock having no such nature, it was indeed no Clock, and could not move; he told him also that there are three things go to the making of a Clock, *the materials, and the shape, and the want of that shape*, before it was made; for it was not a Clock before it was made: now the materials of a Clock are four, iron, and wood, and cords, and lead; and besides these, there is a Bell at the top that is of a fifth kind divers from the other four, and hath a trick of sounding when the hammer strikes upon it: Iron is a material very black and somewhat hard, wood very hard and somewhat white, cord very white and somewhat soft, lead very soft and somewhat black. Here the Farmer interposed and told him he would never believe but that Iron was harder than wood; but the Clockmender replied, that in the Art of Clockmaking softness was nothing but being easily melted: The Farmer urged then Iron would not be hard at all; but his artificer wittily replying it was hard to be melted, he was satisfied; the Clockmender went on, telling him there were other properties also in these materials derived from the former, as that Iron and wood were stiff and unmoving, cord and lead flexible and moving; here the Farmer interrupted him again, telling him the iron wheels moved as well as the cord and lead, and so did the wooden hand of the dial; to which he answered

swered they did not move of themselves as the cord and lead did, and that they moved only to *avoid standing Still*, which is not to be admitted in a Clock; but the Farmer still objected, that he saw no necessity of any such material as wood in a clock; for the frame might as well be of iron; to which he replied, it was for *compleatness of the clock*. But (quoth the Farmer,) the Bell is hard and black as well as the iron; no, reply'd the Engineer, it appears only so, but is not so in its own nature, but only hath a property of sounding. Well, (quoth the Farmer) you have told me the materials of a clock, which I could have told as well my self, but am never the wiser; for my Jack hath iron, and wood, and cord, and lead, and if I should hang a Bell on the top of it, it would not prove a clock: that's true said the clockman, for it hath not the shape of a clock; now the shape of a clock is a *certain trick of activity in a piece of wheelwork, by the number of stroaks on a Bell, to tell the hour of the day*; from this shape there arise several other properties, as the turning about of the wheels, the playing of the ballance, a *secret quality* of the hand pointing to the hour of the day, and a *secret agreement* between the hand of the Dyal, and the hammer of the Bell; for as often as the hand points to any figure, the hammer strikes just so many stroaks upon the Bell; there is also a *hidden disagreement* between the little weights and the great ones; for as fast as these go down, those go up. There are also some clocks of another kind, some with an Alarum to waken a man at a certain time of the night, some have Chimes to play certain Tunes upon Bells: There are also imperfect clocks called Warches that do not strike, but only have a Dyal with an hand turning round. There are also Sun-Dyals that tell the hour of the day by Shadows. But these are imperfect clocks, and not compounded of all four materials; he also reckoned up a great many famous clock-makers of several Countreys that he had learnt his Art of, as also how many clocks he had mended, and concluded with the praise of *Vulcan* and *St. Eloy*, and the whole Art of Smiths work.

8. While they were thus discoursing, in comes a Lock-smith of the next Town, who thought himself as well read in *Clock-Philosophy*, as he that had read this long Lecture, who therefore began to move many controversies, as that Clocks might be made of other materials, *viz.* Steel, Brass, or Silver, (where by the way, they digressed into a long dispute whether Steel and Iron differed in kind, or in degree only) that a Bell was not any fifth kind, but made up of a mixture of other mettals; that there were not four materials of a Clock, but that it might be made up of one or two of them; that cords and plummets were no necessary parts of it, for it might be moved by a spring without them; and many more questions they disputed about till they were both weary.

9. The Farmers Son who was newly come from the University, where he had been a year or two, & had read *Magirus*, was much taken with these learned Lectures of an ordinary Mechanick, and began to suspect he was some disguised Scholar, in that he had so philosophically begun with the definition of nature, *principium & causa motus & quietis ejus in quo est primo & per se, non per accidens*; then proceeded to the three principles, *Matter, Form, and Privation*; after that to the four Elements of a Clock, with their *Primary and Secondary* qualities, and was well pleased with his judgement in making the Bell a *Quintessence* & to contain the elementary qualities not *formally* but *eminently*; and that *softness* should signifie *liquability*, answered just to *humidity* signifying *fluidity*; and that it was as easie to excuse the iron from melting, as the fire from fluidity: he thought also that he distinguished well between natural and violent motions, and took notice how *evitatio vacui & complementum universi* did him Knights-serve. So likewise he defined the form of a Clock very well, *actus primus corporis artificialis organici motum habentis in potentia*: and he believed a *trick of activity* was as good an interpretation of *ενεργεια* as *perfecti habia* which *Hermolaus Barbarus* learnt of the Devil. The qualities did admirably well flow from this form, especially The *occult quality* in the Dyall, and its *sympathy* with the Bell, as also the antipathy of the greater and lesser weights; he also shewed the several

C

species

species of Clocks whether perfectly or imperfectly mixed; how Watches had only a material vegetative soul, the Allarum and Chimes resembled the rational, but the ordinary Clock was of the order of sensitive creatures; & he had excellently well described the nature of the Beast. He seemed to be well read in the school-tinkers, had shewed that *Vulcan* was antienter than *Aristotle*, and *St. Eloy* as great a master of Clockwork as *St. Thomas*: only the Lock-smith he thought made foul work with him, and went as much beyond him, as *Carpenter & Pemble* the more orthodox *Magirus*, & yet he said he might have moved a great many more perilous questions, as whether the hammer were the *intelligencer* of the Bell, and consequently whether *forma informans* or *assistens*; whether the Bell did act upon the elementary parts of the Clock, or they upon the Bell; and if the former, whether it do it by its blackness, or its hardness, or it sounds, or by certain influences; and then whether the forms of the four materials did remain in the Clock intire or refracted, or a fifth form resulting from them all, and whether it were a substantial or accidental form, whether a clock and a watch were *specifically* or *gradually* distinct, with many more which he forbore to mention, as he told them, because they could not understand them.

10. All this while the Landlord of this Farmer was in the house to take order about some reparations, who being an ingenuous Gentleman that had used to take in pieces his own Watch and set it together again, and therefore could not be ignorant of the fabrick of a clock, having with much patience heard all this Targon, at last delivered the good man (who though no fool, yet was never the wiser for all this discourse) from the impertinences of the Clock-mender and the young Philosopher: shewing him that the cause of motion was in the weights, which by the multiplication of indented wheels and Nuts, was so moderated, that the last wheel to the end of whose Axel the hand was fixed, was just twelve hours in turning about, and that there were in every twelfth part of that wheel certain peggs that lifted up the hold-fast of the hammer, which by the motion of other wheels & springs would be made to strike several successive strokes upon the Bell, till the holdfast

holdfast catch in the next notch of a wheele indented several distances according to the number of stroaks at each time to be stricken : he shewed him also that the teeth of the great wheel were so worn, that it would not answer to the just proportion of time it should move in, and therefore he must get a new one made ; in fine he taught him how the motion was derived from part to part, that he thoroughly understood the whole fabrick, and could be able to rectifie any ordinary fault that should happen in it. But the Son all this while being as inept at understanding things, as apt Parrot-like to catch at words, was dissatisfied that he should take no more notice of the substantial form and qualities of a Clock, and told him that he rejected principles, and therefore he would not dispute with him.

11. How far the Clock-menders discourse resembles the Scholastick Philosophy, or the Gentlemans the atomical, let others judge ; I shall only propound this general Query, whether it be any better Philosophy, to say that nature makes the fire to burn, or there is an inward principle of gravity in a stone that makes it fall down, than it would be mechanical skill to say that Art makes the Clock strike, or to say that some inward device makes the hand of the Dyal move ; for as Art is to artificials, so is nature to naturals ; and may be he spake more truly than he was aware of, that called it *Ars Dei*. Then certainly it must be the Office of Philosophy to find out the process of this Divine Art in the great automation of the world, by observing how one part moves another, and how those motions are varied by the several magnitudes, figures, positions of each part, from the first springs or plummets, as I may say, to the hand that points out the visible and last effects ; This Physicians have taken the boldness in part to do, in those little watches, If I may so call them, the bodies of animals, and *Descartes* hath proceeded farthest in the like attempt, in that vast machin, the Universe, with how good success, others are better able to Judge ; But this I dare boldly say, it was a noble effort, and if he had wholly failed in it, he would have been more pitied and less envied.

12. This farther I shall adde in the behalf of new and free

Philosophy, That the Theater of nature is much enlarged since *Aristotles* time, and there is no part of the world where-in there are not some notable new Phenomena lately discovered, that must needs be of great accompt in natural Philosophy: for in the Heavens by the help of telescopes (a new invention) there are found an innumerable company of fixed Stars unknown to the antients, and amongst the planets the *ansule* of *Saturn* and four Moons about *Jupiter* were never heard of till *Galileo's Nuncius Siderens* brought the news, the various phrases of *Venus* (and other Planets) as also her being sometimes on this side the Sun, sometimes beyond, were the suspicions of the Pythagoreans of old, and the certain knowledge of latter times, but not agreeable with *Aristotles* doctrine. Mountains and Valleys in the Moon were never seen before this age, and no body now will venture to deny but that she is as opaque as the earth, and borrows as much light from her as she lends. That the Sun is full of scummy spots continually generated and destroyed, and that he turns round upon his own axis. They that will not trust *Schiner*, may be informed by their own eyes; the appearing of new Stars & disappearing of old was not considered by the antients, nor their appearing sometimes bigger & sometimes less that comets are above the moon, & the Heavens fluid, since *Tycho* few men have doubted, and therefore *Aristotles* Intelligences that moved the solid Orbs, have leave to play; & since that arched roof is gone, I know not how the Elementary fire will be kept in: But if it should chance to prove true (and who knows what posterity may believe, since we have been so hardy as to admit *Antipodes*, which our ancestors beheld as no less formidable a bugbear?) that the Earth is a planet, and the Sun a fixed Star, and by consequence every planet an Earth, every fixed Star a Sun, it would make foul work in the Vulgar Philosophy.

13. But let us descend upon the Earth, where we shall find that Dr. *Gilbert*, instead of the *Oxford Fryers* great black rock at the North Pole, hath perswaded all men that the whole Earthly Globe is a Magnet; and though the Antients knew no more of the Loadstone than its coition which they improperly called attraction, we now find it to be no less remarkable for

its polar direction (not without some variation in several places) as also its various inclination according to its several distance from the Equator & Poles; but the nature of the loadstone can scarce be unknown, since we have seen the circles of the dust about it. The distinct History of the Flux and Reflux of the Sea, is also amongst the *nova reperta*. The antients overlook't that most Luciferous though obvious experiment of the sling, nor did they know what use to make of the Chrystal prisme; They were over-careless spectators of the rainbow; the rosy-figured; particles of snow escaped their sight; but it were infinite to pursue particulars; I will not stand to reckon up the several discoveries we are beholden to the new invented microscope for; nor shall I insist upon the many Chymical experiments that are of use in Philosophy. I pass by the wondrous effects of Gun-powder, nor shall I mention the discoveries of the Air-pump lately exhibited to the world by that Noble Gentleman, or the ingenious experiments of Galileo, Lord Bacon, and many others.

14. I shall only touch upon one Topick more, which is the improvement of Anatomy, and the knowledge of the fabrick of Animals; no man thinks himself bound to believe that the nerves are derived from the heart, and by consequence that to be the seat of common sense, because *Aristotle* tells us so; nor yet, though he could tell us no such thing, to disbelieve the circulation of blood found out by Dr. *Harvey*; What should I mention those other learned Observations of the same Author concerning the Generations of Animals? I omit *Ajellus* his *vena lactea*; as also the *ductus Oblyferus*; & a *Symphatica*, with many more of the like nature, which do as much alter the face of the lesser, as those other before rehearsed of the greater world.

15. Must we now after all these and many more discoveries about natural bodies, confine our selves to what we find in *Aristotle* who never dream'd of any such things? Is it possible that so many new appearances should not alter the frame of Philosophy, nay rather hazard the pulling down of the old ruinous house that had too narrow foundations; that it may be built again with more magnificence? Since we find daily

Generations and corruptions in the heavens, and that the stars themselves are not free from that fate, how can we satisfy our selves with the four Elements of *Aristotle*, or the three principles of the Chymists, which at best can be but the ingredients of terrestrial bodies? besides that they are not so simple as to deserve those titles? and truly to them that have once tasted of the Mechanical Philosophy, formes and qualities are like to give as little satisfaction, as the Clock-mender did to the Intelligent Gentleman in the Story I before told you.

16. No man would be so ridiculous as since *Columbus* discovered the new world of *America*, as big as the old, or since the enlarged knowledge of the North of *Europe*, the South and East of *Asia* and *Africa*, besides the new divisions names and inhabitants of the old parts, to forbid the reading of any more Geography than is found in *Strabo* or *Mela*; or since the *Portuguez* have sailed to the *Indies* by the *Cape of good Hope*, to admit of no other Indian commodities than what are brought on Camels to *Aleppo*; or if posterity shall find out the North-east or Northwest way to *Cathaj*, and *China*, or shall cut the Isthmus between the red Sea and Mediterranean, will it be unlawful to use the advantage of such noble achievements: why then must Philosophy alone be bound up still in its infant-swaddling bands? and there being the same reason, why should we not allow the same liberty of expiating? if any man love acorns since corn is invented, let him eat acorns; but tis very unreasonable he should forbid others the use of wheat. Whatever is solid in the writings of *Aristotle*, these new Philosophers will readily embrace, and they that are most accused for affecting the new, doubt not but they can give as good an account of the old Philosophy, as their most violent accusers, and are probably as much conversant in *Aristotles* writings, though they do not much value those small wares that are usually retained by the generality of his Interpreters.

But me thinks I hear some men say, all innovations are dangerous; *Philosophy* and *Divinity* are so inter-woven by the School-men, that it cannot be safe to separate them; *new Philosophy* will bring in *new Divinity*; and freedom in the one will make men desire a liberty in the other. The very same argu-

mentation the Presbyterians used, when they bore rule in the University, and the *new Philosophy* was interdicted in some Colledges upon that account. But what was the event? it was so much the more eagerly studied and embraced; there was a time when all Learning was upon the same pretence discountenanced; *Græce nosse suspectum erat, Hebraice plane hæreticum*; and there was a Colledge in Cambridge that shut their Gates against the *Greek Testament*: but all their endeavours were but vain; they might as well have hindred the Sun from rising, or being up, from filling the whole *Horizon* with light; Learning and Knowledge will break forth like fire, and pierce like Lightning through all impediments; politeness and elegancy hath long ago subdued Monastick barbarism; *Erasmus* and *Melancthon* with the rest of those restorers of Learning, have made *Holcot* and *Bricot* quite out of fashion; and the inquisitive *Genius* of latter years, like a mighty wind hath brushed down all the Schoolmens Cobwebs. There is an infinite desire of knowledge broken forth in the world, and men may as well hope to stop the tide, or bind the Ocean with Chains, as hinder free *Philosophy* from overflowing: it will be as easie to satisfy mens corporal appetites with chaff & straw, as the desires of their minds with empty words and terms; the Church of *Rome* quickly saw her error in this point, and forbore to strive against the stream; for when she perceived that Learning would be in fashion, she presently set her children to School; and who so great Schollars in all kinds as they? and she hath been so wise ever since, that there shall be no piece of Learning but some of her sons shall be masters of it: and if they will but give her respectful words, they may be as free Philosophers as they please; & I dare say she would take it very ill, if any one should deny *Descartes* or *Gassendus* to be hers. *Galileo* indeed fell under correction for holding the motion of the Earth, but the true crime was his abusing his Holiness in his Dialogues under the name of *Simplicius*; For others have with impunity adventured on as great *Paradoxes*, but they had the good manners to make a leg, and say, *Omnia Ecclesie auctoritati submittimus*.

I will never therefore believe, that the Church of *England* can
be

be more stingy than the Belchams of Rome, but will do of choice, than the other doths of necessity. True Philosophy can never hurt sound Divinity. Christian Religion was never bred up in the *Petipatetick* school; but in her best and healthfullest years in the more Religious Academy, amongst the primitive Fathers; but the Schoolmen afterwards ravished her thence, and shut her up in the decayed ruines of *Alexandria*, where she served an hard servitude, and contracted many distempers: why should she not at last be set at liberty, and suffered to breath in a free air? let her alone be Mistress, and choose her Servants where she best likes; let her old loving Nurse the *Platonick Philosophy* be admitted again into her family; nor is there any cause to doubt but the Mechanick also will be faithful to her, no less against the open violence of *Atheism*, than the secret treachery of *Enthusiasm* and *Superstition*, as the excellent works of a late learned Author have abundantly demonstrated. Nor will it be possible otherwise to free Religion from scorn and contempt, if her Priests be not as well skilled in nature as the people, & her Champions furnish'd with as good Artillery as her enemies. How shall the Clergy be able to maintain their credit with the ingenuous Gentry, who begin generally to be acquainted with the *Astronomical Hypothesis*, and know how to distinguish between a true Gemme and a *Bristol-Diamond*? or how shall they encounter with the witts (as they are called) of the age, that assault Religion with new kind of weapons? will they acquiesce in the authority of *Aristotle* or *St. Thomas*? or be put off with *Contra negantem principia*? let not the Church send out her Souldiers armed with Dock-leaves and Bullrushes, to encounter swords and Guns, but let them wear as good bras & steel as their enemies, and fight with them at their own weapons; and then having Truth and Right on their side let them never despair of victory.

But I had almost forgotten that I was writing a Letter, the ordinary proportions whereof I have already exceeded, and therefore must abruptly conclude, assuring you that I am

Cambridge.

June 23. 1661. Sir yours, Sec.

S. P.